

# HIST! LOTS OF GERMAN PLOTS IN IRVING PLACE

## Something About Baker and George J. Nathan

Attempt Made to Contravert the Impression That the Famous Harvard Professor Conducts a School of Playwriting in His Cambridge Classroom.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

George Jean Nathan, the doubting Thomas of the drama, in his most recent revelation of the utter barrenness of New York's plays, belabors Professor George Pierce Baker, of Harvard.

"How now about this Professor Baker, he who has been press agented so copiously, and shall we not say, persuasively?" writes Mr. Nathan in "The Smart Set." "Consider his producers and his products, not in their later years, when his influence upon them may or may not have been dissipated, as in the cases of Sheldon and Ballard, but fresh from his classroom. In all honesty, has this honorable professor done one thing, soever small, to improve the American drama? I doubt it.

"True, he has taught numerous young fellows the facile trick of building shows, but has he taught them how to write plays? A different thing this latter, and vastly. Has one single dramatic effort containing an ounce of philosophy, an ounce of sober theme, a dash of cultured wit or a trace of smart observation and penetration, come directly from his lecture chamber?"

Mr. Nathan, seemingly, is of the impression that Professor Baker conducts a school for playwrights. Such is not the case. George Pierce Baker is a professor, and a busy one, in Harvard University. His schedule usually is made up of at least three courses. One of these is a course which is designed to teach something concerning the technique of writing plays. No attempt is made to teach philosophy, cultured wit or observation. Possibly this habit of sticking to a subject is a common professorial failure. We recollect that we obtained not the slightest insight into the rise and fall of the Dutch Republic while studying botany.

Given four hours a week for English, 47, Professor Baker never found much spare time to teach philosophy, cultured wit or observation to students who had taken his course in the expectation of learning something about dramatic technique. But, as Mr. Nathan says, "He has taught numerous young fellows the facile trick of building shows." Only, of course, play building is neither facile nor tricky, but difficult and methodical.

Mr. Nathan, it will be observed, goes on to draw a distinction between shows and plays, but the difference rests upon some arbitrary definition of his own which is not important. A show is a play. "Hamlet" is an excellent show, and "Young America" in a lesser degree is a good one. Professor Baker never pretended to do anything more than teach his pupils something about the business of building shows.

As a matter of fact, he has done more than that. Mr. Nathan's facts are more wary than his theory. He has not done wisely in naming Sheldon and Ballard. A number of persons are of the opinion that "Salvation Nell" is the best piece of work Sheldon ever did, in spite of the fact that it was completed shortly after he quit Baker's classroom. "Young America," which Mr. Nathan likes, was begun about one year after Ballard left Harvard. It is a better play than "Believe Me, Xanthippe," written at Harvard. We believe that there is also an upward trend from "The Silver King" of Henry Arthur Jones to "Mrs. Dane's Defence" by the same author. In fact, if we are not mistaken, there is some adage or other about the perfecting qualities of practice.

Of course, there is a degree of truth in what George Jean Nathan says. He has discovered that the classroom of a university is not the best place in the world in which to study life. Who ever said that it was?

There is no great novelty in proclaiming that moving pictures are an important factor in American life. But there are places where such a statement will not be accepted. "Who's Who in America" leaps from Benjamin Whitfield Griffith, who, as you may remember, was "elected Mayor of Vicksburg on a reform ticket in 1905-06," to Elmer Cummins Griffith, the well known author of "Epochs in Baptist History." We suggest to the president of the Liberty Theatre that he send a box for "The Birth of a Nation," by David W. Griffith, to the board of editors of "Who's Who in America."

Upon seeing "The Unchastened Woman" for a second time we were impressed by the merits of the performance given by Miss Christine Norman. There can be no question that her work strikes home. She plays her part in an honest, straight from the shoulder manner that is decidedly attractive. Her acting is as sincere as the tears which trickle down her face in the second act.

The great ability of Miss Norman heightens the brilliant performance of Emily Stevens. Decidedly the best scene in the play is the passage between the two women near the end of the second act. Neither player in such a scene can do well unless her opponent is good. Joseph Jefferson in his autobiography speaks of the team play of two famous actors of his day as follows:

"The acting of these two great artists always set the audience to wondering how they were able to do it. The truth is there was no 'better' about the matter. They were not horses running a race, but artists painting a picture; it was not in their minds which should win, but how they could by their joint efforts, produce a perfect work."

Nothing about dramatic criticism in this city delights us more than its criticism and its high moral quality.

"Now, art is long and this is a fairly broad country, but I don't believe there is room in it for Mr. Boltay's Daughters," says Charles Darnoff, of "The Evening World."

"If there is one thing we keep close to our hearts," he continues, "it's the decency, not to say the sacredness, of the home."

Flie, fly, upon Lear and all his horrid household.

How in this land of ours can the home-wrecking proclivities of an Iago be borne as a theme of drama?

Away with "Ghosts" and banish "Hedda Gabler," not to mention "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" and "The Notorious Mrs. Elphinstone."

After all, as Harry Shaw might have remarked to Mrs. Carmichael: "If there's one thing we keep close to our hearts it's the decency, not to say the sacredness, of the home."

According to "The Theatre" another drama "may be a protest against such poverty as exists in some foreign country, but such poverty and circumstances do not exist here."

"FAIR AND WARMER"

Avery Hopwood's New Farce at the Eltinge Tuesday.

The Selwyns will install "Fair and Warmer" in the Eltinge Theatre on Tuesday evening—Election Night. The new piece is a farce, and the author is Avery Hopwood, who wrote "Nobody's Widow" and helped with "Seven Days." The play is Mr. Hopwood's first New York production in several seasons.

The cast is a notable one, particularly for a farce. It includes Madge Kennedy, Janet Beecher, John Cumberland, Ralph Morgan, Hamilton Revelle, Olive May, Guy Bragdon and Robert Fisher.

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## Are You Ready, Carmens? Then Let Her Flicker

The Carmens are coming to town. Geraldine Farrar, at the Strand, is the Lasky candidate, and Theda Bara, at the Academy of Music, will get the vote of the film forces of William Fox.

The contest promises to be a close one, for the resources of both companies have been pressed to the utmost to turn out the best possible pictures. Miss Farrar has the advantage of having played Carmens on the operatic stage, but this is balanced by the fact that Miss Bara has had more experience in acting before the camera.

It is difficult to pick a winner in advance. Reports from both training camps have been encouraging. The fact that the cigarette girl with whom Miss Bara battled had been confined to her bed for the following week was shortly followed by the news that in an outburst of acting Miss Farrar had knocked away two teeth of her leading man.

According to the press department of the Strand, the Lasky Carmens is "the greatest and most important photo-dramatic production ever presented." Mr. Fox "gives positive promise that Theda Bara will more than fulfill eager expectations in the title role of Carmens" at the Academy of Music. And there you are.

The Strand's Carmens will be accompanied by selections from Bizet's opera by the Strand orchestra. The management of that theatre also announces that the usual Strand prices will prevail.

Are you ready, Carmens? Remember, no biting in the clutches. There goes the bell. The representative of The Tribune will be at the ringside and render a decision on Monday morning.

## Old Films and New On the Screens This Week

Douglas Fairbanks, who did so well in "The Lamb," will be the feature of the Triangle bill at the Knickerbocker Theatre. He will be seen in "Double Trouble," a film version of the novel by Herbert Quick. His part in this is absolutely unlike that which he assumed in the Griffith melodrama. Beanie Barriscale will be seen in Ince's motion picture play, "The Golden Claw," and the farce features will be supplied by Weber and Fields in a film called "The Best of Enemies," and a Keystone comedy entitled "Saved by Wireless."

"The Battle Cry of Peace," the big spectacle play which shows the destruction of New York by a foreign foe, continues at the Vitagraph Theatre.

"The Birth of a Nation," which tells a thrilling tale of the reconstruction period in characteristic Griffith fashion, begins its final four weeks. It will have been seen in New York for 725 consecutive performances, which is a record.

Irene and Vernon Castle continue in the amusing film at the Globe which shows the talented pair in many dances. The film is shown twice on Sundays and



Theda Bara in "The Eternal Magdalene," Produced by Selwyn & Co.



Theda Bara as "Carmen," Fox Film Corporation.



Molly Pearson and Whitford Kane in "Hobson's Choice," Princess.



## Where and Why Plays of the Season Continue

Acting of a High Order To Be Seen in a Number of Plays Which Have Been Produced in New York This Season.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Comedies.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is light comedy of the brightest sort. Well constructed, well acted and thoroughly good spirited, the play has a wide appeal. An exceptionally able cast includes Martha Hedman, Wallace Eddinger and Arthur Byron.

"The Unchastened Woman," at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, gives Miss Emily Stevens one of the finest acting opportunities which any actress has.

Ability to build up the fortunes of a declining business. This time it is candy. Charles Ruggles is amusing in the chief part.

"Abe and Mawruss," at the Lyceum, is a most successful continuation of the version of the adventures of the two characters. The first two acts are advised by Roi Cooper Megrue and Regu Glass in expert fashion. The drama of the defunct sort, in which the act and the happy ending are not so successful. Harney Bernard and Potash contribute a notable performance.

"The New York Idea," at the Playhouse, is a brilliant comedy of the social school. Dialogue is its main consideration. A good cast is headed by Grace George.

"Quinn's," at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, is a pleasing comedy, which takes its time. The carefully drawn character of the furniture loving furniture man is well played by Freddie Ross.

One-Act Plays.

The Washington Square Players at the Bantock Theatre, Fifty-seventh Street and Third Avenue, have an interesting bill of one-act plays. "Interior," of Maeterlinck's, is one of the most beautiful things which has ever been done in New York. Percy MacKaye's "The Antick" has the charming Lydia Lopokova in a delightful part. Philip Moeller's "Helen's Husband" is a witty bit of historical burlesque and "Fire and Water" is a moderately engrossing play about the war.

Farces.

"Miss Information," at the George M. Cohan Theatre, is devoted with the all-pervading ability of Elsie Janis, who does many things and all of them attractively. The play contains some dancing and not a little music, which is well sung, but not by Miss Janis.

"Hit-the-Trail Holiday," at the Astor, is a play about Billy Sunday by George M. Cohan.

Problem Plays.

"Common Clay," at the Republic, is a powerful play which treats of a social problem, but does not solve it. The play has big moments, which are played aggressively and effectively, but seemingly none the less effectively by a cast of well known players. Jess Cowl and John Mason are supported by such other excellent actors as Robert McWade, Russ Wymann, Mabel Cord and Dudley Hawley.

Melodrama.

"Under Fire," at the Hudson Theatre, romanticizes about the Great War in interesting fashion. Paris is saved by a native son, with an Irish accent and the Germans are defeated at the Marne just in time to bring peace of mind to a lovely heroine. William Courtenay is the hero, Violet Heming the heroine, and Frank Craven an engaging although not altogether true to life newspaper man.

"Sherlock Holmes," at the Empire, brings William Gillette back to town in the ever popular story of the adventures of Doyle's great detective. The play stands up well in spite of its age, and the thrill of the gas chamber scene is as intense as ever.

"The House of Glass," at the Candler, is a police melodrama with a powerful punch in certain scenes, although its pace is none too fast. The capable Mary Ryan is entrusted with an emotional role which calls for a deal of perturbation.

Musical Plays.

"Hip-Hip-Hooray," at the Hippodrome, is an entertainment which goes to prove that taste may be exercised even in a large scale production. The performance is full of surprises, and those features which are not new are ever before. Sousa's Band, Orville Harrold's voice, Nat Willis's jokes and many tons of handsome scenery among the attractions of the big playhouse.

"The Princess Pat," at the Cort, is a comedy which boasts of a score of Victor Herbert and an exceedingly fetching performance by Eleanor Painter, who has a voice to sing, grace to dance and skill to act.

"Chin-Chin," at the Globe, is Montgomery and Stone at their best, which may account for the fact that the production is running strongly in its second season.

"Alone at Last," at the Shubert, has a magnificent score by Franz Lehár, an indifferent book and an elaborate but decidedly tasteless setting.

"Town Topics," at the Century, is a wholesome show, made up of a number of specialists, among whom the amusing is Will Rogers, Ririe Felt, Gus Cline, Peter Page, Bert Leslie and Eileen Moloney are among the performers whose work is pleasing.

"The Girl Who Smiles," at the Longacre, is made well worth while through the participation of the pleasant voiced Natalie Ait. The book is amusing at times, but it is hardly as consistently delightful as the music.

"The Blue Paradise," at the Casino, profits by the amusing work of Cline and Cleo Mayfield. The book is tawdry but not in the least disgusting.

"The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic," at the New Amsterdam Roof, is drawing after the theatre entertainment with an exceedingly attractive chorus.

SECOND BANDBOX BILL

Washington Square Players in New Plays November 5.

Four plays from four languages will be presented at the Bantock Theatre one week from to-morrow. In the main the new programme of the Washington Square Players will be one of comedy. From the French will come "Whimsy" by Alfred de Musset—said to be the first de Musset play ever given in America. From the German, Schiller's "Literature." "The Honorable Lover" will be a translation of the Braccio's Italian. The fourth will be an American play, by Alice Gerstenberg of Chicago, author of the dramatization of "Alice in Wonderland."

The French and Italian plays have been translated by Ralph Roeder, and the Washington Square Players, and the translation of the Schnitzler play is by Elsie Plaut.

## "Around the Map" Next, at the New Amsterdam

From "Moloch" to "Around the Map" threatens to be a good leap. Undoubtedly it will be good in more ways than one. "Around the Map" is one of those big musical productions, and promises to be everything that "Moloch" was not. The New Amsterdam Theatre, however, has had several weeks of idleness in which to prepare for the change, and all is expected to pass off smoothly. The premiere will occur to-morrow night.

The new show is a "musical globe trot," and this fact has given Joseph Urban the opportunity to cut loose scenically. There are thirteen scenes in the piece, and all of them have been urbaned. C. M. C. McEllan, author of "The Pink Lady" and countless others, has supplied the book and lyrics. The music is by Herman Finck, better known abroad than in this country. However, he wrote several numbers of "The Girl from Utah." The dependable Julian Mitchell has staged the musical numbers.

Of course, there is a story of sufficient strength to carry the characters on the globe trot. A wagger of half a million francs figures prominently in the action, and the cast is whisked to Berlin, Fort Arthur, San Francisco and numerous other points. The piece is in three acts.

Eise Adler, of the Johann Strauss Theatre, Vienna, will make her New York debut and her first appearance in an English speaking role. Others will be Georgia O'Ramey, William Norris,

had in seasons. Miss Stevens accepts it. Her playing in the part of Caroline Knollys is a triumph. Miss Christine Norman is a most effective foil in a contrasting character which is well drawn and well acted. The play is not without its theatrical touches, but its dramatic appeal is undeniable. At the present writing the performance stands as the best achievement of the season.

"Mrs. Boltay's Daughters," at the Comedy, is a clever comedy and well played. The persons with whom it deals, however, are an unpleasant lot, and its subject matter makes it necessary, in justice to the play, to recommend it only to those sophisticated theatregoers who do not care in the least about the morals of the characters whom they see on the stage.

"Young America," at the Gaiety, is decidedly wholesome. It is a skillfully devised story about a boy and his dog. Percy Helton, Otto Krueger, Peggy Wood and Jasper, the thinking dog, make up an excellent cast.

"Our Mrs. McChesney," at the Lyceum, brings Edna Ferber's engaging character to the stage. Unfortunately the dramatization has been done with little skill, and while there are amusing moments and good strokes of character drawing, the product is far from being a good play. Ethel Barrymore, whose charm and ability are unquestioned, is not very well suited in her present part and has appeared to much better advantage.

"The Two Virtues," at the Booth, enables E. H. Sothern to remind the public that he is a finished comedian. Mr. Sutor's comedy is a bit talky, but none the less interesting.

"Rolling Stones," at the Harris, is a brisk play, by Edgar Selwyn, dealing with the adventures of two young wastrels, who show the usual theatrical

## "HOBSON'S CHOICE" AT THE PRINCESS

English Provincial Comedy To Have Premiere Tuesday.

With Yorkshire already being treated dramatically and successfully "Quinn's," at the Maxine Elliott, New York will be shown a new play of English provincial life on Tuesday afternoon. Lancashire is the locale of "Hobson's Choice," and the play is said to possess all the quaintness of "Quinn's." The play will have its premiere at the Princess.

"Hobson's Choice" is a comedy in four acts by Harold Brighouse, staged by B. Iden Payne. The central character, a shopkeeper, has four daughters to dispose of, and it is his attempt to arrange their marriages according to his own wishes that furnish the action. Molly Pearson, the original Bunty in "Bunty Pulls the Strings," will be in the cast. Others will be Viola Roach, Olive Wilmot Davis, Harold D. Becker, A. G. Andrews, Marie Hudspeth, Harry J. Ashford, Whitford Kane, Walter Fredericks, Agnes Dornette, Barnett Parker and Robert Forsyth.

## BILLS FOR SUNDAY CONCERTS

Star Performers Are Promised for Attractions To-day.

Three added attractions, in addition to the long list of performers from the cast of "Town Topics," are announced for this evening at the Century. The headliners are the Russian Balalaika Orchestra, Sylvester Schaeffer and James J. Corbett.

The Sunday night entertainment at the Hippodrome continues to assume larger proportions weekly. A chorus of three hundred "Hip-Hip-Hooray" girls will take part to-night, as well as Sousa's Band, Orville Harrold, Belle Storey, Nat Willis, the Marimbas and Charlotte. A new Sousa march, "The Pathfinder of Panama," will be played in New York for the first time.

At the Standard Theatre this evening the New York Orchestral Society will begin a series of Sunday night concerts. The orchestra is under the leadership of Max Jacobs.

Fashion Show on Ice.

New York's first iceed fashion show, under the direction of Mrs. John W. Alexander, widow of the painter, will be given at St. Nicholas Rink, on November 16. The display, which will be the first of six, will show what is in skating togethery this season. The second exhibition, on November 23, will have to do with skating evening gowns.

## JULIA ARTHUR COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT

"Eternal Magdalene" Will Have Opening To-morrow.

Julia Arthur and a play of promise by a new author will divide honors at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre to-morrow evening. Miss Arthur, now Mrs. P. E. Cheney, Jr., of Boston, has been in retirement for sixteen years. As usual, however, the call of the footlights has finally become too loud to be denied.

Considerable has already been written about "The Eternal Magdalene." The author, Robert H. McLaughlin, was a Cleveland newspaper man. The play first saw the light in Cleveland as a stock production, and immediately New York producers began to bid. The Selwyns and A. H. Woods acquired the rights.

East of the Alleghenies little is

Gladys Brockwell, Triangle Play, Knickerbocker.

Geraldine Farrar as "Carmen," Strand.

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